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Consideration of reports submitted by the Secretary-General

Activities of the Department of Public Information: news services

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, prepared in accordance with General Assembly resolution 72/90 B, provides a summary of the key advances made by the Department of Public Information from September 2017 to March 2018 in promoting the work of the United Nations to a global audience through its news services.

The news services subprogramme, one of three subprogrammes of the Department, is implemented by its News and Media Division. Its objectives are to support the United Nations through high-quality, relevant and timely information products concerning the Organization's activities across multimedia platforms in multiple languages and to increase the geographic range and frequency of the use of its products by media outlets and other users.

The activities carried out under the other two subprogrammes of the Department, namely, strategic communications services and outreach and knowledge services, are described in separate reports of the Secretary-General (A/AC.198/2018/2 and A/AC.198/2018/4, respectively).

* Reissued for technical reasons on 8 March 2018.
** A/AC.198/2018/1.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 72/90 B, the General Assembly took note of the reports of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Department of Public Information submitted for consideration by the Committee on Information at its thirty-ninth session (A/AC.198/2017/2, A/AC.198/2017/3 and A/AC.198/2017/4) and requested the Secretary-General to continue to report to the Committee on the activities of the Department.

2. The Department hereby submits the information requested on news services.

3. The present report covers the services provided by the News and Media Division, highlighting progress made in multilingual multimedia production, including radio, television, video, photography, print, Internet and social media. It also places emphasis on the use of multilingualism with respect to the websites managed by the Department and other content created by the Department, whether for digital or traditional platforms.

II. Overview

4. The Department produces and delivers accurate and timely news and information products for global audiences and media partners, responding to rapidly evolving information consumption patterns while continuing to produce content for traditional media. Working in the six official languages of the United Nations, as well as Kiswahili and Portuguese, the Department adheres to the Committee's priorities and guidance as it expands audience reach across audio, video, print and digital platforms.

5. In line with the Committee's call for a sustained culture of evaluation that enables the Department to focus its messages and products for the greatest impact and reach, the Department uses evaluation metrics and feedback in its work, including an audience impact study conducted at the Committee's request in 2016. As part of this ongoing effort, the News and Media Division developed a more targeted daily metrics dashboard for statistical monitoring and information on audience reach and engagement across its web properties.

6. The Department also created special multimedia features to provide clear information for general audiences on different platforms. An example is a new information hub on the website of the Organization (www.un.org) entitled "The Essential UN", available in all six official languages. It provides readily accessible information on the Organization's work and priorities, aimed at dispelling myths by presenting facts. In tandem, the Department produced a short explainer video entitled "What is the UN?" that was adapted for multiple languages. For social media users, a series of 16 images focusing on how the United Nations makes a difference in the lives of everyone, everywhere, was captioned in the six official languages, as well as Kiswahili and Portuguese.

III. Digital

A. United Nations website

7. During the period from 1 January to 29 November 2017, the macro website of the Organization (www.un.org) and the multilingual gateway to the United Nations globally registered audience growth of 7.5 per cent, reaching 42 million unique users (the number of people who visit a website), and an engagement increase of 5 per cent, with 144 million page views (the number of times that content was viewed).

8. While the English-language website continued to register the greatest number of users (see figure I), the websites for the Arabic, English and Spanish languages registered the most growth in reach (see figure II).

Figure I
Unique users, by language, 1 January–29 November 2017

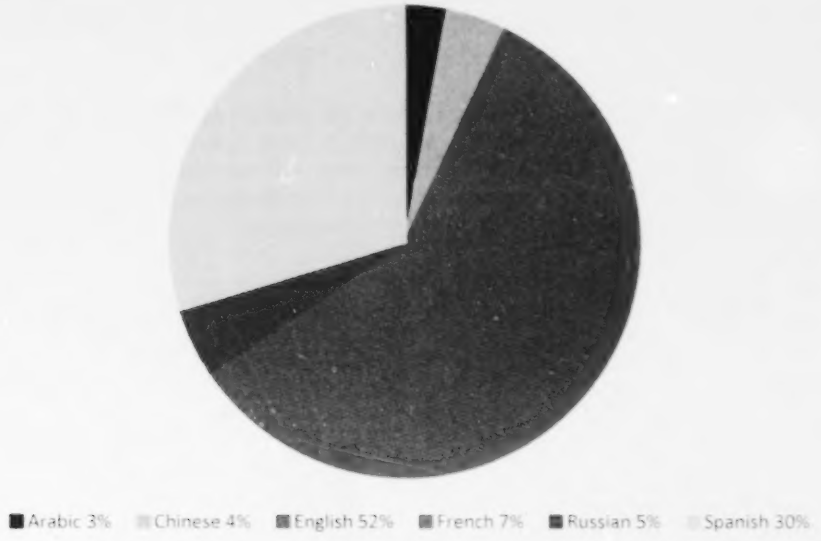
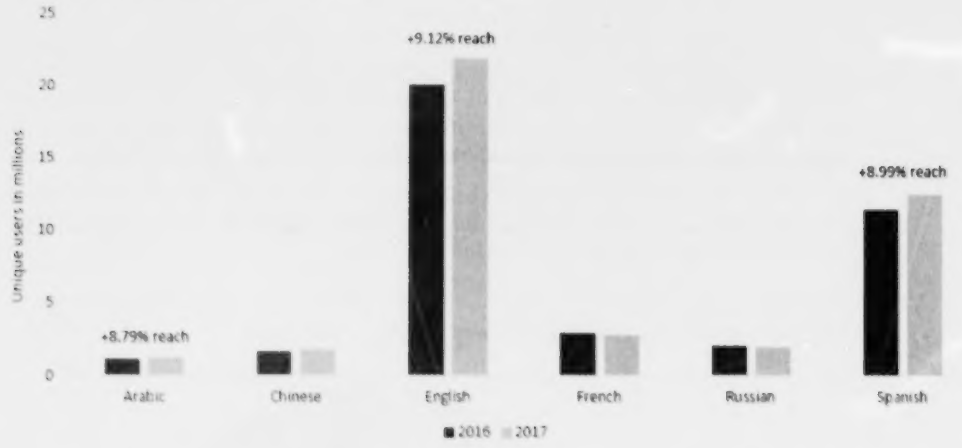
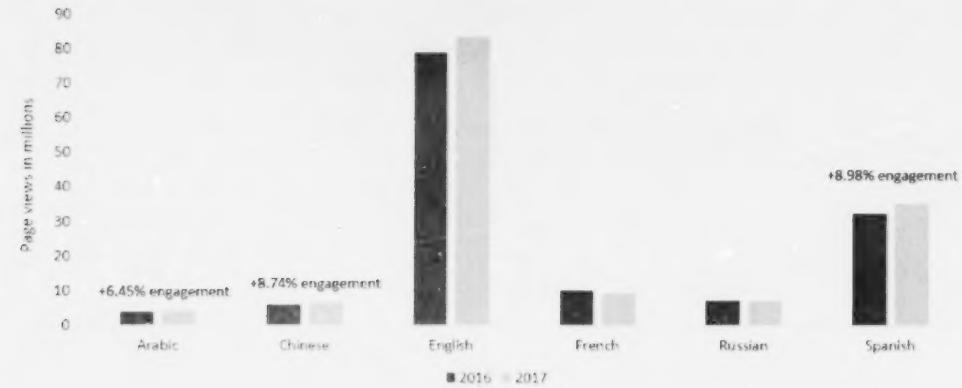


Figure II
Reach, by language, 1 January–29 November 2017



9. The websites in Spanish, Chinese and Arabic registered the most growth in engagement, at more than 8.9 per cent, 8.7 per cent and 6.4 per cent growth, respectively (see figure III). The Department will continue to monitor and evaluate audience behaviour on the basis of the available data so as to develop optimal ways of addressing audience variation between languages.

Figure III
Engagement by language, 1 January–29 November 2017



10. Dwell time on the United Nations website also increased, with the average time spent on each page by each viewer increasing from 2.5 minutes to 3 minutes. This is a significant duration by industry standards, indicating a notable depth of engagement with audiences.

11. As the custodian of the macro website, the Department continued to apply strict multilingualism criteria to requests from author departments for new pages and sites and to work with partners such as universities to increase the availability of substantive content across the wider website, with a view to achieving language parity. All of the top pages managed by the Web Services Section are multilingual and fully accessible to persons with disabilities.

12. Significant sites launched during the reporting period include:

- Office of Counter-Terrorism (www.un.org/en/counterterrorism/)
- Preventing sexual exploitation and abuse (www.un.org/preventing-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse/)
- Sustainable Development Goals media zone (www.un.org/sdgmediazone/)
- Spotlight Initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls (www.un.org/en/spotlight-initiative/)

13. Multilingual and accessible microsites were also developed for new international observance days.

14. As part of its ongoing commitment to harmonizing visual branding across the United Nations websites, the Department redesigned the General Assembly site (www.un.org/en/ga/) to ensure that its content is more readily accessible and searchable. The fully multilingual website of the President of the General Assembly was relaunched in September with an updated design that serves to improve the user experience and the presentation of the President's key priorities.

15. During the reporting period, the United Nations home page (www.un.org) was upgraded and several new features were introduced to improve the user experience and make it more engaging. These changes include an expansion of multimedia features on the site, including more video and photo sections, graphics relating to global issues on the United Nations agenda and weekly featured content from organizations of the United Nations system. Among other technological additions, a "Donate" button was introduced on the site in July 2017 to allow visitors to donate to those agencies, funds and programmes that accept donations. More than 2,000 separate donations have since been received.

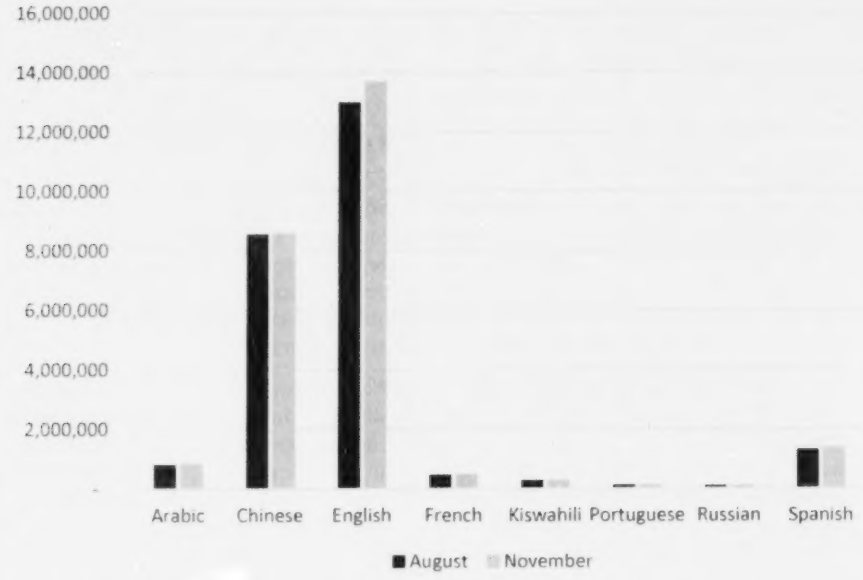
16. The Department is continuing to oversee and manage the implementation of the macro website analytics tracker for the Secretariat's public web properties. This ensures balanced and impartial measurement of the reach and impact of all content published on proprietary websites by the United Nations, regardless of the platform on which that content is consumed.

B. Social media

17. At its thirty-ninth session, the Committee on Information requested that the Department report on how it would ensure greater balance with regard to multilingualism in developing its social media presence. In August 2017, the Department strengthened its multilingual social media activities by placing the flagship corporate accounts under the management of a single dedicated multilingual social media team. From the start, the team has worked towards language parity by developing and implementing the Department's overall multilingual social media strategy. The result has been more coherent messaging with significantly greater impact in the six official languages, as well as in Kiswahili and Portuguese.

18. Audience reach and engagement for the flagship accounts has grown markedly since the inception of the multilingual social media team. In the first four months of the new team's existence, the accounts attracted more than 1 million additional fans or followers, bringing the total (including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, WeChat and Sina Weibo) as at January 2018 to more than 30 million across all languages (see figure IV).

Figure IV
Followers of United Nations flagship social media accounts by language, August–November 2017



19. While audience sizes and rates of engagement increased across languages, they were particularly high among Arabic- and Spanish-speaking audiences. For example, a video in Spanish created to commemorate the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was viewed more than 900,000 times. Similarly, a video in Arabic on the Organization's humanitarian relief efforts in Yemen was watched at least 350,000 times.

20. During the high-level segment at the seventy-second session of the General Assembly, more than 100 pieces of unique content, including messages delivered directly by world leaders, were created by the multilingual social media team at the VIP social media space. One of the most popular pieces was a live video interview on Facebook with the Secretary-General, which received over 1 million views during the high-level segment, making this the Organization's most popular video ever on Facebook.

21. Recognizing that every social media platform has unique criteria for content and that most social media fans and followers struggle with information overload, the social media team developed a more tailored and targeted strategy that is aimed at distributing content to audience groups on the basis, increasingly, of profile data, rather than simply attempting to drive users to multiple platforms. This audience-

facing, data-driven approach enabled the team to focus its production activities on two types of content: timely, engaging material that is optimized for each language and platform audience and material that explicitly shows the impact, relevance and cost-effectiveness of the work of the United Nations.

IV. News services

22. The work of the multilingual multimedia news services has undergone significant changes, with increased requests for support for major conferences and campaigns. As demand has increased, units have worked together across platforms to produce and share content that is timely, engaging and relevant for radio and other media partners, as well as for global audiences.

23. The Department took note of statements made by delegations at the thirty-ninth session of the Committee on Information with regard to the need to communicate with diverse audiences across multiple demographics while continuing to produce audio content for radio and other traditional media programming. The Department continues to work to bridge the digital divide, ensuring that audiences have access to traditional and new media across diverse languages and platforms. The news and video teams forge new partnerships with both traditional and new external media outlets to increase information dissemination.

A. Video and television

Video production

24. The Video Section continued to produce a wealth of features in different languages for global broadcast partners. In addition, the Section increased its production of multilingual video content for different platforms, reaching out to youth audiences via partnerships and captioning video for viewing on mobile devices. The Section is working to improve outreach to youth by partnering with mobile-first platforms such as NowThis, which reaches 65 million young people on their mobile phones through social media. The Section started exploring the creation of virtual reality films highlighting the Organization's efforts to reach remote communities to deliver aid.

25. During the reporting period, the Section produced videos for high-level events, including a curtain-raiser for the high-level meeting on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and the European Union-United Nations Spotlight Initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls. A video on climate change that was produced for Heads of State and Government and screened at the opening of the General Assembly received more than 100,000 views on the Organization's flagship social media accounts and was repurposed for the One Planet Summit held in Paris in December 2017 and hosted by the World Bank, the United Nations and the Government of France.

26. Other videos highlighting the newly established Office of Counter-Terrorism, the work of Member States and events held to mark World Humanitarian Day were made available in the six official languages, along with Kiswahili and Portuguese. A video on climate, produced to coincide with the United Nations Climate Change Conference held in Bonn, Germany, in November 2017, was translated into Chinese and French.

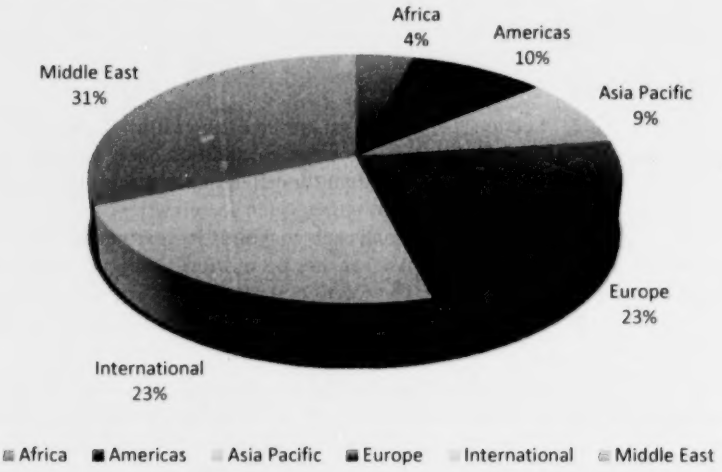
27. To engage youth audiences, the Video Section partnered with NowThis to produce a behind-the-scenes film with the newly appointed Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth during her first General Assembly session. Building on this partnership, the Section produced a piece with a Yazidi girl documenting the atrocities that she lived through. Her testimony and the work of the United Nations to support the Yazidis was featured in a piece by NowThis released in November 2017.

UNifeed

28. The Department's news video syndication package, UNifeed, continued to be a key source of important footage for broadcasters around the world, delivering timely broadcast-quality video from Headquarters in New York and peacekeeping missions, as well as more than 40 partner agencies, funds and programmes.

29. In September 2017, UNifeed materials were aired by broadcasters around the world 7,147 times (referred to as "hits" in figure V below). In the three months from September to December 2017, UNifeed footage was used by broadcasters 25,683 times, with a significant minority of these hits (31 per cent of the total) accounted for by broadcasters in the Middle East.

Figure V
UNifeed hits by region, September–December 2017



30. To reach broadcasters anywhere in the world, UNifeed began using LiveU connectivity, which allows it to broadcast information from remote areas. This technology was used for the first time during the Secretary-General's trip to the hurricane-affected areas in the Caribbean in October 2017. In addition, UNifeed was able to broadcast the Secretary-General's activities direct from the Central African Republic and provide content for the Department's multimedia news operations to use on their platforms.

Webcasting

31. The Department has regularly sought ways to improve and expand the Organization's live and on-demand webcast services on multiple platforms, including

mobile devices. Most open meetings in New York, Geneva and The Hague, as well as press briefings, media stakeouts, special events and other major United Nations conferences, were webcast live and on demand through United Nations Web TV in all six official languages.

32. The webcast website is reaching a growing number of audiences in more than 210 countries and territories. Over 60,000 videos have been made available on the website for on-demand access.

33. For the first time, the Department provided live streaming of the General Assembly's general debate on four platforms: United Nations Web TV, the United Nations channel on YouTube, Facebook and Twitter (@UNWebTV). This multiplatform streaming brought the debate live to more than 10 million users watching and listening in 217 countries and territories. In addition, a video of every speech given at the general debate was made available separately for on-demand viewing in the six official languages.

United Nations channel on YouTube

34. By the end of 2017, the audience of the United Nations channel on YouTube (www.youtube.com/unitednations) exceeded 41 million, a 57 per cent increase compared with the previous year. The number of subscribers increased by 70 per cent, approaching 200,000. The Department's round-the-clock channel, managed by its Television Broadcast and Facilities Unit, is also available on YouTube. Users have provided thousands of comments and shared their views.

Live coverage, television broadcasting and facilities

35. The Department continued to provide the global media, including broadcasters, with gavel-to-gavel, high-definition live feeds of events with embedded audio in the six official languages. These events included meetings of the General Assembly and the Security Council, press conferences and media encounters, as well as international conferences sponsored by organizations of the United Nations system. In addition, the Organization's television studio operations produced video messages from the Secretary-General and other senior officials.

B. Radio, print and multimedia coverage

36. One of the major projects of the past year was the development of a new integrated news platform, UN News (https://news.un.org), in the six official languages, Kiswahili and Portuguese. Text, radio, photos, video and graphic content can now be published on a single multilingual platform. This represents a significant change in the way the Department's news and features are disseminated. Bringing together all content formats on one platform and extending the same supporting technology to each language contributes to ensuring language parity.

37. Through the multimedia website, news and feature stories with audio, microvideos, text and photos are made available to consumers and radio partners in a single online news hub and can be dispatched by email in the eight languages mentioned above. In keeping with industry practices, the news portal incorporates such features as the Pocket service, which allows the consumer to save a story and read it later; a playlist function for viewing or listening to content in one go; news-related feeds; and multiple sharing tools. As access to mobile communications technology increases around the world, much of the Organization's content is being

created in a mobile-friendly form. During the reporting period, the Organization's single most popular app, the UN News Reader app, was enhanced and rendered media rich and multilingual.

38. The eight UN News language units provide coverage of news from across the United Nations system and produce features on the Organization's work and priorities while also responding to the needs of their respective audiences and addressing issues of particular interest to them.

39. The Arabic Language Unit fed coverage of topical issues such as migration, refugees, and peace and security to both traditional and non-traditional media outlets. To engage Arab youth, who are increasingly using digital media, the Unit adapted its stories for dissemination through social media. In addition, the team conducted interviews with United Nations officials working in the Arab region, such as the humanitarian coordinators for Iraq and Yemen and senior United Nations officials dealing with the Syrian crisis, as well as country representatives of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Children's Fund in Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Libya and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya was interviewed shortly after his appointment, and the resulting UN News report served to explain his plan and priorities to the Libyan people and global audiences.

40. During the high-level meetings of the General Assembly, the Arabic Language Unit served as a credible source of information for its regional audiences as well as for members of the media and other organizations. One of the highlights was the reporting of an early reaction from a representative of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) in the region as soon as Saudi Arabia announced its decision to lift a prohibition on women driving. The information was shared across languages and the story resonated widely across platforms. Another story of particular interest concerned the General Assembly resolution on the status of Jerusalem, which also received an energetic response on social media. During the reporting period, the Unit also highlighted activities by Member States in support of the United Nations, such as the contribution of Oman to the digitization of the Organization's audiovisual archives.

41. The Chinese Language Unit strengthened its strategic partnerships with major radio stations, including China National Radio, Radio Beijing, Radio Shanghai and China Radio International. Through end-to-end live link-ups with China National Radio, scheduled for high-traffic periods when large numbers of listeners were tuning in, the Unit made it possible for United Nations information to reach audiences estimated to be in the millions. On Earth Day, UN News reached an estimated audience of 50 million in central and eastern China by sharing its programmes on the environment with Radio Shanghai.

42. The Chinese Language Unit made new efforts to increase audiences outside China through partnerships under the Global Chinese Broadcasting Cooperation Network with more than 40 Chinese-speaking radio stations in all parts of the world. Stations in New York and Melbourne routinely used the Unit's news and feature programmes. On the occasion of Chinese New Year, a link-up with these outlets reached audiences in North America and Australia.

43. The Unit also attained tangible results with its multimedia content. The video of the remarks made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of China during the general debate of the General Assembly was viewed more than 1,600,000 times, while a series

of videos of the Secretary-General's visit to the hurricane-hit Caribbean countries in October 2017 was viewed some 42,000 times on the Miaopai video platform of Sina Weibo.

44. The English Language Unit continued to lead the production of innovative news content for diverse audiences and more "evergreen" content providing succinct answers to basic questions about the Organization. The seventy-second session of the General Assembly saw the creation of the first "@UNGA today", a short daily video jointly produced during the high-level segment by UN News and UN Video and highlighting key moments of each day. These videos were among the most popular posts on the social media platforms of UN News for September 2017, with nearly 50,000 views on Twitter and Facebook. The number of page views on the English website of UN News reached more than 3 million from September to December 2017. During the high-level segment of the Assembly, page views surged by some 200 per cent. The UN News social media platforms also attracted a great deal of attention and enjoyed sustained growth, reaching close to 500,000 followers on Facebook and over 300,000 on Twitter.

45. United Nations radio products in English continued to perform well, registering some 250,000 downloads by radio partners and direct listeners during the September–December period. Podcasting is now being built up to a weekly show focusing on a range of compelling issues, including counter-terrorism, peacekeeping and cyberbullying.

46. The print and radio output of the French Language Unit of UN News continued to increase, attracting users around the globe. The high-level segment of the General Assembly saw a spike in weekly page views to reach a figure that was 20 per cent higher than average. During the General Assembly, the Unit interviewed Heads of State and Government from Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Madagascar and Senegal, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region. The Unit's audio products were downloaded at least 100,000 times by radio broadcast partners and direct listeners worldwide.

47. Stories about United Nations experts on anti-terrorist legislation and the visit of the humanoid robot Sophia for a United Nations event were among those that garnered the most interest, as did stories relating to events and issues in francophone Africa and coverage relating to health and climate change, including the United Nations Climate Change Conference held in November 2017. When the Secretary-General visited the Central African Republic in October 2017, the French Language Unit provided comprehensive online, video and audio coverage for its target audiences. His visit in the same month to the Caribbean islands devastated by Hurricanes Irma and Maria generated significant attention on the UN News social media platforms in French, which have been attracting a steadily increasing number of followers over the past year.

48. The French Language Unit reinforced its programming for francophone Africa, including through coverage relating to regional envoys and senior humanitarian officials, as well as representatives of United Nations peacekeeping missions in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mali. The Unit worked with the Department's Africa Section to highlight stories directly relevant to target audiences. In addition, it enhanced its efforts to create, or produce the French version of, videos such as *The Week in Review* and *The Week Ahead*, and also to produce French versions of videos created by other UN News language units. The Unit also interviewed officials from the International Organization of la

Francophonie, including its Secretary-General, Michaëlle Jean, and the new Permanent Observer to the United Nations.

49. The Kiswahili Language Unit continued to serve as an important source of information for audiences in Eastern Africa and the diaspora. Coverage related to, inter alia, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, human rights and the role of such troop contributors as Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania in peacekeeping. The Unit enhanced its multimedia production by creating Kiswahili versions of videos, including most messages from the Secretary-General, with a focus on quality and impact. These efforts resulted in a boost in impact, including a 150 per cent increase in the number of subscribers to the Department's Kiswahili channel on YouTube. The Unit also entered into new partnerships in the reporting period, including in Somalia and the United Republic of Tanzania, with traditional and online radio stations, as well as online blogs.

50. In the wake of the deadly attacks on Tanzanian peacekeepers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in December 2017, the Kiswahili Language Unit, working with the United Nations Information Centre in Dar es Salaam, played a critical role in obtaining information and reaching out to partners, such as the Tanzania Broadcasting Corporation, for footage to be used across languages and platforms and in delivering the Organization's message to Kiswahili speakers. The Unit's interview with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the United Republic of Tanzania swiftly provided accurate information and was widely rebroadcast.

51. The Portuguese Language Unit reached audiences in Latin America, lusophone Africa, Europe and the wider diaspora, working with media partners both within and outside the United Nations and responding to audience interest in the context of the sizeable following generated by the Secretary-General. New partnerships with traditional and new media outlets were established during the reporting period, including in Angola, Brazil and Cabo Verde.

52. The Portuguese Language Unit continued its daily news programme, *Destaque ONU News*, featuring interviews with lusophone ambassadors and high-level United Nations officials. The programme allows audiences to participate with comments and questions through digital engagement platforms, and some segments have been picked up by other media outlets. The Unit also conducted Facebook Live interviews, including one in September 2017 with the Force Commander of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti ahead of the closure of the Mission, which reached over 70,000 people in less than 24 hours. During the high-level segment of the General Assembly, the Unit interviewed lusophone Heads of State and Government. Its interview with the President of Brazil was broadcast nationwide by the Brazilian network NBR and used by other popular outlets.

53. The Russian Language Unit strengthened its status as a reliable source of information about the work of the United Nations for Russian-speaking audiences worldwide. It produced news and features on critically important global issues on the Organization's agenda, such as migration, climate change, human rights, peacekeeping, sustainable development and the status of women, while also producing content on areas of particular interest to Russian-language audiences. During the reporting period, the Unit played a leading role in developing and testing the new integrated UN News site as part of the first phase of the launch of the site in the eight languages.

54. Multimedia stories produced by the Russian Language Unit were picked up and rebroadcast by a growing number of news agencies, broadcasters, print media,

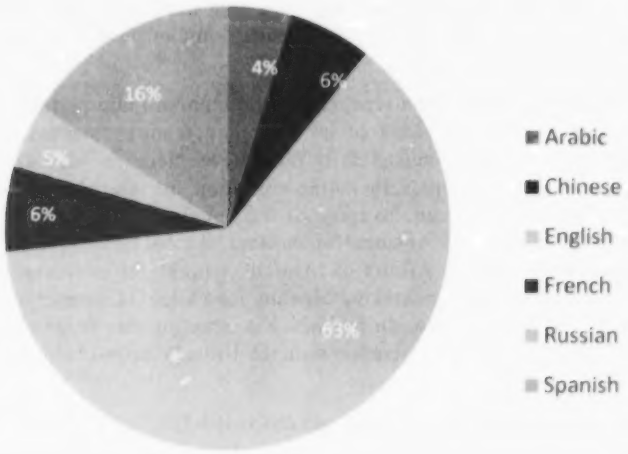
non-governmental organizations and educational institutions. Audience engagement also increased, owing largely to the Unit's use of creative multimedia approaches to providing information. For example, the Unit produced and adapted short video clips and other multimedia materials and produced Russian-language versions so as to support multilingual outreach and information provision and to increase the availability of Russian-language products for global audiences. The Unit also used news-related digital platforms to expand and engage audiences and to increase traffic to the multimedia news web page.

55. The Spanish Language Unit reached out to potential radio partners around the world to further expand the reach of its news and feature coverage. During the reporting period, the team produced daily radio news pieces as well as multimedia features on a wide range of topics, including migration, human rights and sustainable development. Spanish-language coverage of the opening of the General Assembly included interviews with the President of Panama, the Vice-President of Argentina and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mexico. A highlight in December was the coverage of the Preparatory Stocktaking Meeting for a Global Compact on Migration, held in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, during which a large number of participants were interviewed and featured, in cooperation with the United Nations Information Centre in Mexico City.

56. The two most popular news pieces on the Spanish UN News website both related to the Organization's response to the September earthquake in central Mexico. The Spanish news tweets that generated the greatest response concerned the Catalan referendum, with more than 400,000 impressions and 15,155 engagements. The Spanish Language Unit's top post on Facebook was a video clip from 19 September 2017 of the President of Guatemala delivering a speech about the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala, which registered some 1,855 engagements.

57. Overall, UN News in English continued to receive the largest percentage of page views among the six official languages, with 63 per cent of the total (see figure VI). From September to December 2017, the UN News pages across the six official languages registered a combined total of 4,938,863 page views.

Figure VI
Total page views by language, September–December 2017



V. Other services

A. Photos and audiovisual archives

58. The Photo Library distributed 102,000 high-resolution photos during the reporting period and responded to more than 7,800 requests from Member States, the media, publishers, organizations of the wider United Nations system and the general public.

59. The Photo Library continued to use social media platforms to showcase the work of the Organization. The Flickr account added 2 million views in the past year, bringing the accumulated number of views to 37 million. The Library also created a series of thematic albums to provide users with curated content showcasing United Nations photos that can be shared easily on social media platforms.

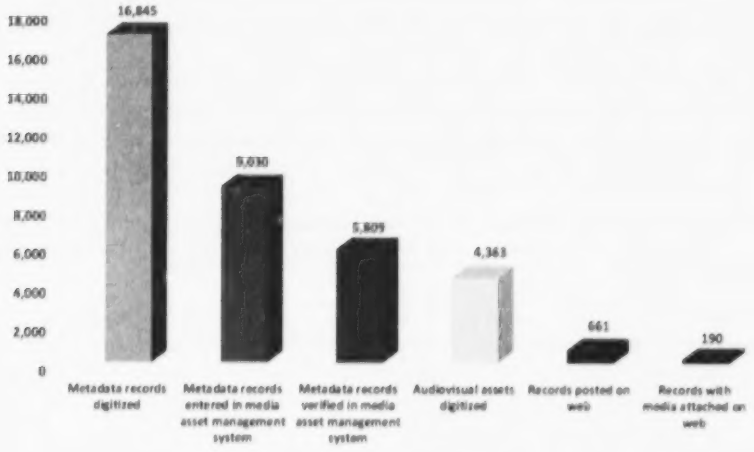
60. The United Nations Photo Facebook page garnered a monthly average of 9,600 engagements throughout 2017. As at January 2018, the United Nations Photo Twitter page had over 84,000 followers.

61. In line with the urgency expressed by the Committee on Information with regard to the digitization of the Organization's historic audiovisual records, the Department moved forward with its five-year digitization project, made possible through a donation from the Government of Oman.

62. Those films, videos and audio recordings that are at the highest risk of decay, obsolescence and total loss were identified as priority items, along with material relating to the main meetings and events from 1945 to the 1980s. In parallel, the team selected television documentaries and series produced by the Department that have long-term value. All available language versions are being digitized.

63. The project involves the media assets themselves and also quality assurance and digitization of the related metadata that make audiovisual items identifiable, searchable, retrievable and accessible. After a pilot in 2016, digitization started in the second quarter of 2017, following the procurement of a service provider. By the end of 2017, the digitization of almost 16,845 important metadata records had been completed and another 9,030 metadata records had been entered in the Department's media asset management system (see figure VII).

Figure VII
Digitization project output as at January 2018



64. As the United Nations audiovisual collection continues to grow, the Department is investigating different options for a long-term preservation system based on international standards and best practices for the digital preservation of audiovisual archives. It is working closely with the Office of Information and Communications Technology for technical input and to ensure that any solution meets information and communications technology standards.

B. Meetings coverage

65. As a key part of its news-related services, the Meetings Coverage Section continued to provide fast, accurate and comprehensive coverage of all the open meetings of the principal organs of the United Nations and their key subsidiary bodies, along with selected press conferences and briefings. Press releases and meeting summaries were distributed to a worldwide audience, online and through the global network of United Nations information centres.

66. Between 1 July and 31 December 2017, the Section produced 1,901 press releases in English and French, with a total of 10,462 pages. That output comprised summaries of meetings (782), press releases of statements made by officials (895) and summaries and transcripts of press briefings and conferences (224). Of those, a total of 427 press releases related to the main part of the General Assembly session, including plenary meetings and the meetings of the six Main Committees, from mid-September to December 2017.

67. A total of 474 press releases covered the Security Council, including the ministerial-level meetings on the settlement of conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa and combating the terrorist threat in the region; countering the financing of terrorism and violent extremism; and women and peace and security. Substantive debates on the full range of items on the Council's agenda, including children and armed conflict, the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, peace and security in Africa, the international criminal tribunals and the protection of civilians, were covered in speaker-by-speaker summaries. Security Council press statements were also included. Another 38 press releases related to the Economic and Social Council, including the substantive session that was held during the reporting period. A further 694 press releases included statements, remarks and messages from the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General, as well as materials from other United Nations offices and departments.

68. Statistics collected through Google Analytics show that, between 1 July and 31 December 2017, the Meetings Coverage and Press Releases websites in English and French registered an increase in the number of users, page views and sessions compared with the same period in 2016. The English-language site registered a 19 per cent increase in the number of sessions, a 46 per cent increase in the number of users and 15 per cent more page views. The French-language site registered a 20 per cent increase in the number of sessions, a 44 per cent rise in the number of users and 13 per cent more page views.

69. A comparison with the same period in 2016 shows that the largest increase in the number of online sessions occurred in the Central Africa region for the English-language site, with an increase of 113 per cent (see figure VIII), and in the Caribbean for the French-language site, which registered a 76 per cent increase (see figure IX).

Figure VIII

Increase in number of sessions by region, English website, 1 July–31 December 2017, compared with the same period in 2016 (percentage)

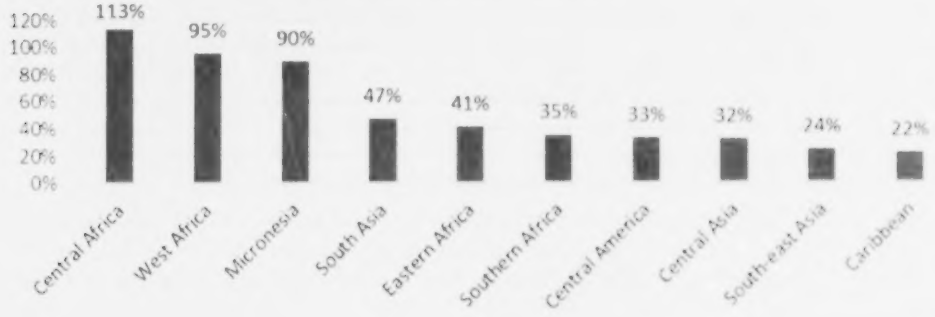
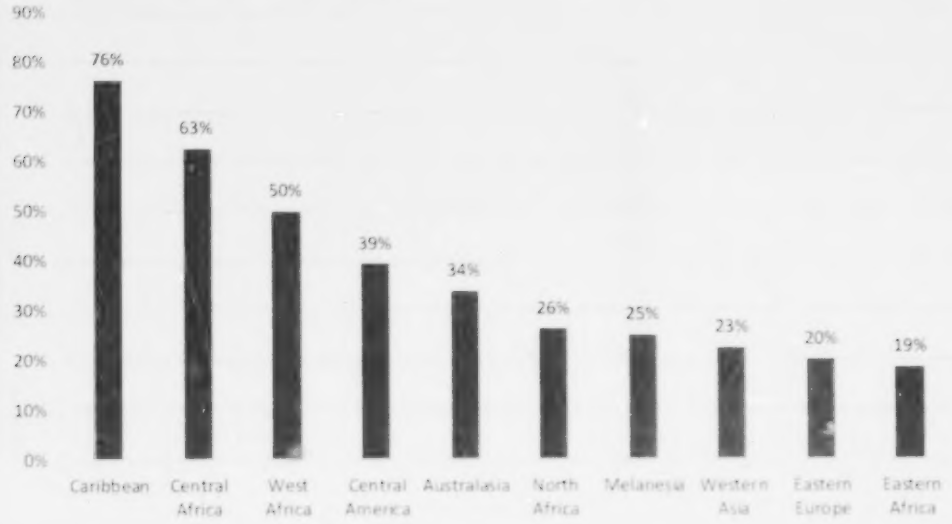


Figure IX

Increase in number of sessions by region, French website, 1 July–31 December 2017, compared with the same period in 2016 (percentage)



70. The greatest increase in the number of sessions for the English-language site was seen in South Asia, with 69,488 additional sessions between 1 July and 31 December compared with the same period the previous year (see figure X). For the French-language site, 12,618 additional sessions were registered from West Africa compared with the same period in 2016 (see figure XI). With regard to specific countries, the largest increase in the number of sessions was seen in India for the English-language meetings coverage products and from France for the French-language products.

Figure X

Increase in number of sessions, English website, 1 July–31 December 2017, compared with the same period in 2016

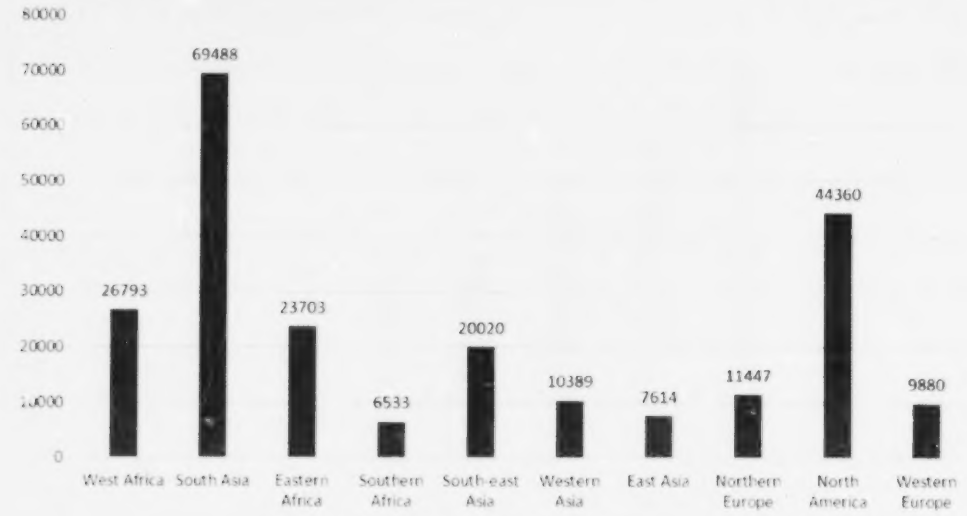
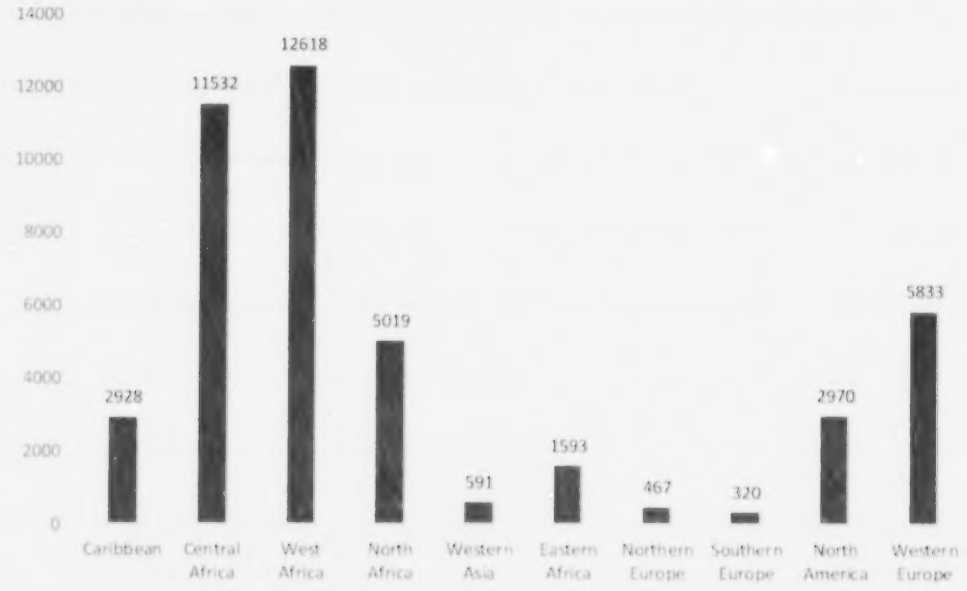


Figure XI

Increase in number of sessions, French website, 1 July–31 December 2017, compared with the same period in 2016



71. The Department continued to seek solutions to the Committee's request for press releases in all official languages and, in that regard, continued consultations with the

Department for General Assembly and Conference Management. In line with the Committee's request that the Secretary-General ensure that the Department has the capacity in all the official languages to undertake all of its activities, the Department requested additional posts and non-post resources in the regular budget for 2018–2019. However, the request for additional posts was not approved and other budget reductions were also imposed by the General Assembly.

C. Media accreditation and liaison

72. Between September 2017 and March 2018, the Department's Media Accreditation and Liaison Unit processed some 3,300 requests for accreditation to cover events held at United Nations Headquarters, including during the general debate of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly and other high-level events. The Unit also oversaw media accreditation for the Preparatory Stocktaking Meeting for a Global Compact on Migration, held in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, in December 2017.

73. In advance of the general debate at the General Assembly, the Unit briefed representatives of the media and Member States on media arrangements. It coordinated and oversaw a media centre, ensuring that journalists were adequately accommodated and supported in covering all aspects of the Organization's work during the general debate period.

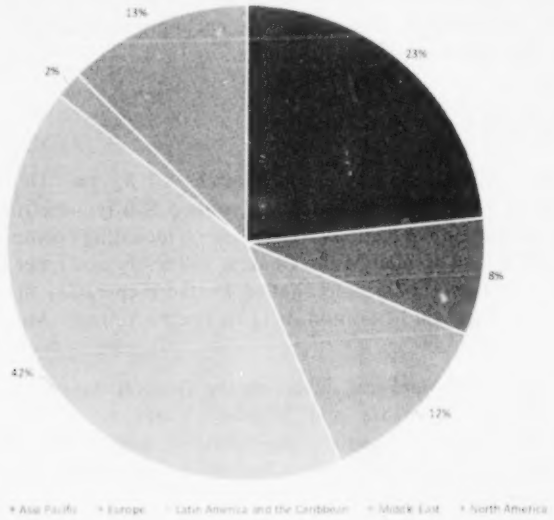
74. From September to March, the Unit provided information and logistical assistance for some 430 press stakeouts and briefings that were attended by 4,000 journalists. It also facilitated media coverage of some 200 bilateral meetings and photo opportunities with the Secretary-General.

75. To flag meetings and other events for media coverage, the Unit distributed its media alert, together with information and key documents, to members of the press and other clients through its website and email lists as well as through its Twitter account, which, as at January 2018, had more than 40,000 followers.

D. Partnerships

76. At its thirty-ninth session, the Committee on Information requested that the Department of Public Information continue to build partnerships to extend the Organization's message to all corners of the world. The Department's current television and radio partnerships reach across all regions, the largest number being in Latin America and the Caribbean, followed by Africa. While broadcasters in the Middle East currently account for the smallest proportion of the Department's formal partnership agreements, the Department's products are clearly of interest to broadcasters in that region, with UNifeed news footage being aired more frequently by broadcasters in the Middle East than by those in any other region.

Figure XII
United Nations television and radio partners by region as at January 2018



77. To address the communications challenges posed by the digital divide, the Department expanded its partnership activities with media outlets in Africa — a region where traditional broadcast media continue to enjoy the widest reach, even as the use of mobile technology, including the consumption of media content on smartphones, is increasing significantly. In addition to establishing new radio partnerships with FM broadcasters across the continent, the Department launched a partnership in October 2017 with Tuluntulu, a popular mobile video app based in South Africa that streams content over mobile networks to subscribers across the continent. Tuluntulu added the videos *21st Century* and *UN in Action* to its curated channel, which is available to all subscribers to the platform.

78. Responding to both technological innovations and changes in content consumption behaviour, the Department continued to establish and build new partnerships in the non-traditional media sector. In September 2017, Xiamen Airlines screened on all its aircraft, directly after each flight's post-take-off safety briefing, a video promoting the General Assembly and the Department's related coverage. The promotional video was seen by 2.3 million passengers. In January 2018, as part of its agreement with the Department, Xiamen Airlines unveiled, at a special ceremony in Charleston, United States of America, a Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner painted with bespoke livery promoting awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals.

E. News monitoring

79. The Department continued to monitor global media coverage of the United Nations and major international issues related to its mission, drawing from an increased array of media outlets. During the reporting period, the Department provided daily clippings and headlines to email subscribers in the United Nations system and contributed to the Department's analysis of media coverage of the work of the Organization, as part of a broader effort to undertake impact evaluation.

VI. A culture of evaluation

80. The Department has been assessing the delivery of its mandated activities using a broad array of quantitative and qualitative data. Using industry-standard embedded analytics code as a foundation for its audience insights, the Department also draws on analysis from other sources, including its Evaluation and Communications Research Unit and United Nations information centres, as well as news monitoring and coverage analyses.

81. Part of this process involved rolling out a universal user tracking code to gather uniform data from all web traffic to the Department's proprietary sites, including all the new integrated news sites. The intention is to present all these data in a single analytics dashboard, which is currently in development. The dashboard will provide the Department with a more detailed picture of user behaviour, including content and delivery preferences. In addition, the Department has been conducting internal reviews of the content that it produces to evaluate message delivery, suitability and coherence.

82. During the reporting period, the Department assessed the range of platforms and services on which content products are made available to determine their efficiency in reaching target audiences globally, taking into account content consumption patterns and needs.

83. Through an ongoing review of both qualitative and quantitative data, the Department has been developing a more comprehensive analysis of how it delivers on the Organization's information priorities.

VII. Conclusion

84. With the guidance of the Committee on Information as the foundation of all its work, the Department of Public Information continues to examine its news and media services to ensure that they maintain the highest standards of quality in delivering timely, accurate and balanced reporting on United Nations concerns and activities to target audiences across the six official languages, as well as in Kiswahili and Portuguese.

85. The Department has been committed, creative and proactive in enhancing multilingualism across its programmes and activities, including through the consolidation of the multilingual social media team to manage the Organization's flagship accounts in the eight languages and increased cooperation across platforms. With the new UN News web presence, the Department's multimedia news operations have gained a single harmonized public-facing platform for each of the eight languages, with enhanced functionalities for their audiences.

86. From digitizing the Organization's historical audiovisual archives to providing footage from remote areas around the world, the Department is adapting to the fast-changing information environment so as to meet the needs of its diverse audiences. By producing both traditional and new media products, expanding its network of partner stations and broadcasters and increasingly using data analytics to assess and align outputs, the Department is enhancing its efforts to raise awareness of and build support for the work of the Organization.